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Born at Hamburg, February 3, 1809 — Died at Leipsic, November 4, 1847

ELIJAH

ORATORIO. Opus 70. Produced at Birmingham under the composer's direction August 26, 1846. English version by William Bartholomew, adapted from the original arrangement in German of Scriptural texts. Sixty-fourth performance by the Society; first time February 13, 1848, at the Melodeon.

The Author of this English Version has endeavoured to render it as nearly in accordance with the Scriptural Texts as the Music to which it is adapted will admit: the references are therefore to be considered rather as authorities than quotations.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

Recitative.

Elijah.—As God the Lord of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

1 Kings xvii. 1.

OVERTURE.

Chorus.

The People.—Help, Lord! wilt Thou quite destroy us?

The harvest now is over, the summer days are gone, and yet no power cometh to help us! Will then the Lord be no more God in Zion?

Jeremiah viii. 20.

Recitative Chorus.

The deeps afford no water; and the rivers are exhausted! The suckling's tongue now cleaveth for thirst to his mouth: the infant children ask for bread, and there is no one breaketh it to feed them!

Lament. iv. 4.

Duet and Chorus.

The People.—Lord! bow thine ear to our prayer!

Duet.—Zion spreadeth her hands for aid; and there is neither help nor comfort.

Lament. i. 17.

Recitative

Obadiah. — Ye people, rend your hearts, and not your garments, for your transgressions the Prophet Elijah hath sealed the heavens through the word of God. I therefore say to ye, Forsake your idols, return to God, for He is slow to anger, and merciful, and kind and gracious, and repenteth Him of the evil.

Joel ii. 12, 13.

Aria.

If with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me. Thus saith our God.

Oh! that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come before His presence.

Deut. iv. 29. Job xxiii. 3.

Chorus.

The People.—Yet doth the Lord see it not: He mocketh at us; His curse hath fallen down upon us; His wrath will pursue us, till He destroy us!

For He, the Lord our God, He is a jealous God; and He visiteth all the father's sin on the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. His mercies on thousands fall—fall on all them that love Him, and keep His commandments.

Deut. xxviii. 22. Exodus xx. 5, 6.

Recitative

An Angel.—Elijah! get thee hence; depart, and turn thee eastward: thither hide thee by Cherith's brook. There shalt thou drink its waters; and the Lord thy God hath commanded the ravens to feed thee there: so do according unto His word.

1 Kings xvii. 3.

Recitative.

An Angel.—Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah arise and depart, and get thee to Zarephath; thither abide: for the Lord hath commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. And the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

1 Kings xvii. 7, 9, 14.

Recitative and Aria.

The Widow.—What have I to do with thee, O man of God? art thou come to me, to call my sin unto remembrance?—to slay my son art thou come hither? Help me, man of God! my son is sick, and his sickness is so sore, that there is no breath left in him! I go mourning all the day long; I lie down and weep at night. See mine affliction. Be thou the orphan's helper!

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Elijah.—Give me thy son. Turn unto her, O Lord my God; in mercy help this widow's son! For Thou art gracious, and full of compassion, and plenteous in mercy and truth. Lord, my God, let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!

The Widow.—Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee?

Elijah.—Lord, my God, O let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!

The Widow.—The Lord hath heard thy prayer, the soul of my son reviveth!

Elijah.—Now behold, thy son liveth!

The Widow.—Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that His word in thy mouth is the truth. What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

Both.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

O blessed are they who fear Him!

1 Kings xvii. 17, 18, 21—24. Job x. 15. Psalm xxxviii. 6; vi. 7; x. 14; lxxxvi. 15, 16; lxxxviii. 10; cxxviii. 1.

Chorus.

Blessed are the men who fear Him; they ever walk in the ways of peace. Through darkness riseth light to the upright. He is gracious, compassionate; He is righteous.

Psalm cxxviii. 1; cxii. 1, 4.

Recitative.—ELIJAH, AHAB, and CHORUS.

Elijah.—As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth, before whom I stand three years this day fulfilled, I will show myself unto Ahab; and the Lord will then send rain again upon the earth.

Ahab.—Art thou Elijah? art thou he that troubleth Israel?

Chorus.—Thou art Elijah, he that troubleth Israel!

Elijah.—I never troubled Israel's peace: it is thou, Ahab, and all thy father's house. Ye have forsaken God's commands; and thou hast followed Baalim!

Now send and gather to me, the whole of Israel unto Mount Carmel: there summon the prophets of Baal, and also the prophets of the groves, who are feasted at Jezebel's table. Then we shall see whose God is the Lord.

Chorus.—And then we shall see whose God is God the Lord.

Elijah.—Rise, then, ye priests of Baal: select and slay a bullock, and put no fire under it: uplift your voices, and call the god ye worship; and I then will call on the Lord Jehovah: and the God who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

Chorus.—Yea; and the God who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

Elijah.—Call first upon your god: your numbers are many: I, even I, only remain, one prophet of the Lord! Invoke your forest-gods and mountain-deities.

1 Kings xvii. 17; xviii, 1, 15, 18, 19, 23—25.

Chorus.

Priests of Baal.—Baal, we cry to thee! hear and answer us! Heed the sacrifice we offer! Baal, O hear us and answer us.

Hear us, Baal. Hear, mighty God. Baal, oh answer us. Baal, let thy flames fall and extirpate the foe! Hear us!

Recitative.

Elijah.—Call him louder, for he is a god! He talketh; or he is pursuing; or he is in a journey; or, peradventure, he sleepeth; so awaken him: call him louder.

Chorus.

Priests of Baal.—Hear our cry, O Baal! now arise! wherefore slumber?

Recitative.

Elijah.—Call him louder! he heareth not. With knives and lancets cut yourselves after your manner: leap upon the altar ye have made: call him, and prohecy! Not a voice will answer you; none will listen, none heed you.

Chorus.

Priests of Baal.—Hear and answer, Baal! Mark! how the scorner derideth us! Hear and answer!

1 Kings xviii. 1, 15, 17, 18, 19, 23—29.

Recitative and Aria.

Elijah.—Draw near all ye people: come to me!

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel! this day let it be known that Thou art God; and I am Thy servant! O show to all this people that I have done these things according to Thy word! O hear me, Lord, and answer me; and show this people that Thou art Lord God; and let their hearts again be turned!

1 Kings xviii. 30, 36, 37.

Recitative.

Elijah.—O Thou, who makest Thine angels spirits;—Thou, whose ministers are flaming fires, let them now descend!

Psalm civ. 4.

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Chorus.

The People.—The fire descends from heaven; the flames consume his offering!

Before Him upon your faces fall! The Lord is God: O Israel hear! Our God is one Lord: and we will have no other gods before the Lord!

1 Kings xviii. 38, 39.

Recitative.

Elijah.—Take all the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape you: bring them down to Kishon's brook, and there let them be slain.

Chorus.

The People.—Take all the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape us; bring all, and slay them!

1 Kings xviii. 40.

Aria.

Elijah.—Is not His word like a fire: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock into pieces?

For God is angry with the wicked every day: and if the wicked turn not, the Lord will whet His sword; and He hath bent His bow, and made it ready.

Jer. xxiii. 29. Psalm vii. 11, 12.

Arioso.

Woe unto them who forsake Him! destruction shall fall upon them, for they have transgressed against Him. Though they are by Him redeemed, yet they have spoken falsely against Him. Destruction shall fall upon them. Even from Him have they fled.

Hosea vii. 13.

Recitative and Chorus.

Obadiah.—O man of God, help thy people! Among the Idols of the Gentiles, are there any that can command the rain, or cause the heavens to give their showers? The Lord our God alone can do these things.

Elijah.—O Lord, thou hast overthrown thine enemies and destroyed them. Look down on us from heaven, O Lord; regard the distress of Thy people: open the heavens and send us relief: help, help Thy servant now; O God!

The People.—Open the heavens and send us relief: help, help Thy servant now, O God!

Elijah.—Go up now, child, and look toward the sea. Hath my prayer been heard by the Lord?

The Youth.—There is nothing. The heavens are as brass above me.

Elijah.—When the heavens are closed up because they have sinned against Thee, yet if they pray and confess Thy name, and turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them; then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin! Help! send Thy servant help, O God!

The People.—Then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin! Help! send Thy servant help, O Lord!

Elijah.—Go up again, and still look toward the sea.

The Youth.—There is nothing. The earth is as iron under me!

Elijah.—Hearest thou no sound of rain?—seest thou nothing arise from the deep?

The Youth.—No; there is nothing.

Elijah.—Have respect to the prayer of Thy servant, O Lord, my God! Unto Thee will I cry, Lord, my rock; be not silent to me; and Thy great mercies remember, Lord!

The Youth.—Behold, a little cloud ariseth now from the waters; it is like a man's hand! The heavens are black with clouds and with wind: the storm rusheth louder and louder!

The People.—Thanks be to God, for all His mercies!

Elijah.—Thanks be to God, for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for evermore!

Jer. xiv. 22. 2 Chron. vi. 19, 26, 27. Deut. xxviii. 23. Psalm xxviii. 1; cvi. 1. 1 Kings xviii. 43, 45.

Chorus. (The People)

Thanks be to God! He laveth the thirsty land! The waters gather; they rush along; they are lifting their voices!

The stormy billows are high; their fury is mighty. But the Lord is above them, and Almighty! Psalm xciii. 3, 4.

INTERMISSION.

PART II

Aria.

Hear ye, Israel; hear what the Lord speaketh:—"Oh, hadst thou heeded my commandments!"

Who hath believed our report; to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to him oppressed by Tyrants thus saith the Lord:—I am He that comforteth; be not afraid, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee. Say, who are thou, that thou art afraid of a man that shall die, and forgettest the Lord. thy Maker, who hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the earth's foundations? Be not afraid, for I thy God will strengthen thee.

Isaiah xlviii. 1, 18; liii. 1; xlix. 7; xli. 10; li. 12, 13.

Chorus.

Be not afraid, saith God the Lord. Be not afraid! thy help is near. God,

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the Lord thy God, saith unto thee, "Be not afraid!"

Though thousands languish and fall beside thee, and tens of thousands around thee perish, yet still it shall not come nigh thee.

Isaiah xli. 10. Psalm xci. 7.

Recitative and Chorus.

Elijah.—The Lord hath exalted thee from among the people, and o'er his people Israel hath made thee King. But thou Ahab, hast done evil to provoke him to anger above all that were before thee: as if it had been a light thing for thee to walk in the sins of Jeroboam. Thou hast made a grove, and an altar to Baal, and serv'd him and worshipp'd him. Thou hast killed the righteous, and also taken possession. And the Lord shall smite all Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He shall give Israel up, and thou shalt know He is the Lord.

The Queen.—Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel?

Chorus.—We heard it with our ears.

The Queen.—Hath he not prophesied also against the King of Israel?

Chorus.—We heard it with our ears.

The Queen.—And why hath he spoken in the name of the Lord? Doth Ahab govern the kingdom of Israel while Elijah's power is greater than the king's?

The gods do so to me, and more; if, by to-morrow about this time, I make not his life as the life of one of them whom he hath sacrificed at the brook of Kishon!

Chorus.—He shall perish!

The Queen.—Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?

Chorus.—He shall perish!

The Queen. — Yea, by sword he destroyed them all!

Chorus.—He destroyed them all!

The Queen.—He also closed the heavens!

Chorus.—He also closed the heavens!

The Queen.—And called down a famine upon the land.

Chorus.—And called down a famine upon the land.

The Queen.—So go ye forth and seize Elijah, for he is worthy to die; slaughter him! do unto him as he hath done!

Recitative

Obadiah.—Man of God, now let my words be precious in thy sight. Thus saith Jezebel; "Elijah is worthy to die." So the mighty gather against thee, and they have prepared a net for thy steps; that they may seize thee, that they may slay thee. Arise, then, and hasten for thy life; to the wilderness journey. The Lord thy God doth go with thee: He will not fail thee, He will not forsake thee. Now begone, and bless me also.

Elijah.—Though stricken, they have not grieved! Tarry here, my servant: the Lord be with thee. I journey hence to the wilderness.

2 Kings i. 13. Jer. v. 3. xxvi. 11. Psalm lix. 3. 1 Kings xix. 4. Deut. xxxi. 6. Exodus xii. 32. 1 Samuel xvii. 37.

Aria.

Elijah.—It is enough, O Lord; now take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers! I desire to live no longer: now let me die, for my days are but vanity!

I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts! for the Children of Israel have broken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain all Thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I, only am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

Job vii. 16. 1 Kings xix. 10.

Recitative.

See now he sleepeth beneath a juniper tree in the wilderness! and there the angels of the Lord, encamp round about all them that fear Him.

Trio.

Angels—O lift thine eyes to the mountains, whence cometh help. Thy help cometh from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He hath said, thy foot shall not be moved: thy Keeper will never slumber.

Psalm cxxi. 1, 3.

Chorus.

He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps. Shouldst thou, walking in grief, languish, He will quicken thee.

Psalm cxxi. 4; cxxxviii. 7.

Recitative.

The Angel.—Arise, Elijah, for thou hast a long journey before thee. Forty days and forty nights shalt thou go to Horeb, the mount of God. O Lord, I have labour'd in vain! yea, I have spent my strength, have spent my strength for naught! O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down. That the mountains would flow down at thy presence, to make thy Name known to thine adversaries, through the wonders of thy works! O Lord, why hast Thou made them to err from thy ways? and hardened their hearts, that they do not fear thee? O that I now might die!

Aria.

O rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desires. Commit thy way unto Him,

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and trust in Him, and fret not thyself because of evil doers.

Psalm xxxvii. 1, 7.

Recitative.

Elijah.—Night falleth round me, O Lord! Be Thou not far from me! hide not Thy face, O Lord, from me; my soul is thirsting for Thee, as a thirsty land.

An Angel.—Arise, now! get thee without, stand on the mount before the Lord; for there His glory will appear and shine on thee! Thy face must be veiled, for He draweth near.

Psalm cxliii. 6, 7. 1 Kings xix. 11.

Chorus.

Behold! God the Lord passed by! And a mighty wind rent the mountains around, brake in pieces the rocks, brake them before the Lord: but yet the Lord was not in the tempest.

Behold! God the Lord passed by! And the sea was upheaved, and the earth was shaken: but yet the Lord was not in the earthquake.

And after the earthquake there came a fire: but yet the Lord was not in the fire.

And after the fire there came a still small voice; and in that still voice, onward came the Lord.

1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

Recitative.

Elijah.—I go on my way in the strength of the Lord. For Thou art my Lord; and I will suffer for Thy sake. My heart is therefore glad, my glory rejoiceth, and my flesh shall also rest in hope.

1 Kings xix. 15, 18. Psalm lxxi. 16; xxi. 2, 9.

Arioso.

Elijah.—For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Thy kindness shall not depart from me, neither shall the covenant of Thy peace be removed.

Isaiah liv. 10.

Aria.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's realm. Joy on their head shall be for everlasting, and all sorrow and mourning shall flee away for ever.

Matthew xiii. 43. Isaiah li. 11.

Chorus.

And then shall your light break forth as the light of morning breaketh; and your health shall speedily spring forth then; and the glory of the Lord ever shall reward you.

Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy name is in all the nations! Thou fillest heaven with Thy glory. Amen!

Isaiah lviii. 8. Psalm viii. 1.

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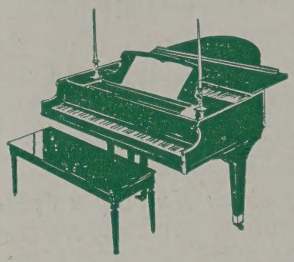

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